

POSSIBILITY UPON A POSSIBILITY

By Mike J. Burrows

Tucked away in the stamp catalogues are two Great Britain low values which never seem to get into the limelight. But recent auctions and dealers lists are now beginning to reflect the scarcity of the two values, 2d and 1d K.G.V, printed on Basted Mills Uvatermarked Multiple Royal Cypher paper.

All the sheets from this very small printing by Harrison, issued in August 1913, which bore the control C13, were intended for making up into coils. Indeed most were but some sheets were issued in the normal manner. Stamps from these sheets can be readily recognised if in horizontal pairs. Owing to the sheets being fed int the machine the wrong way round inverted watermarks are also known.

At the beginning of the reign of King George V much change and experimentation was going on at the printers, which, if one reads the reports in the contemporary press concerning the previous K.G.V. Mackennal frame/Downey head issues, is readily understandable. The general public of the day was far from pleased with the stamps of their new Monarch.

Printing stamps 'in the web' or in a continuous roll had not been perfcted at this time, so sheets of stamps were taken from stock to be used for coil purposes. The coils of either 500 or 1000, with top end or bottom end delivery, were hand made by tearing the sheets into vertical strips and joining the margin of every 10th stamp. A coil leader was attached which was given a Key letter, from A-H, to denote its contents, For instance, Key E was for 500 1d stamps T.E.D. Likewise G was the same for the ½d value.

Having read the above rough outline of these two particular issues, it will be realised that in all probability these are two stamps that cannot be found perfinned. However at the time they were in current use there was a demand for stamp affixing apparatus of which several were beginning to appear on the market. Some of these affixers had perfin facilities, so it is just possible that perfinned examples do exist.

Also, some of the complete sheets not used for coils may have found their way into the hands of a security conscious company, or even into the stock of one of the perf in contractors who were in business at that time.